

CONNECT  
PROTECT  
REFLECT



Photo: Doug Goodin



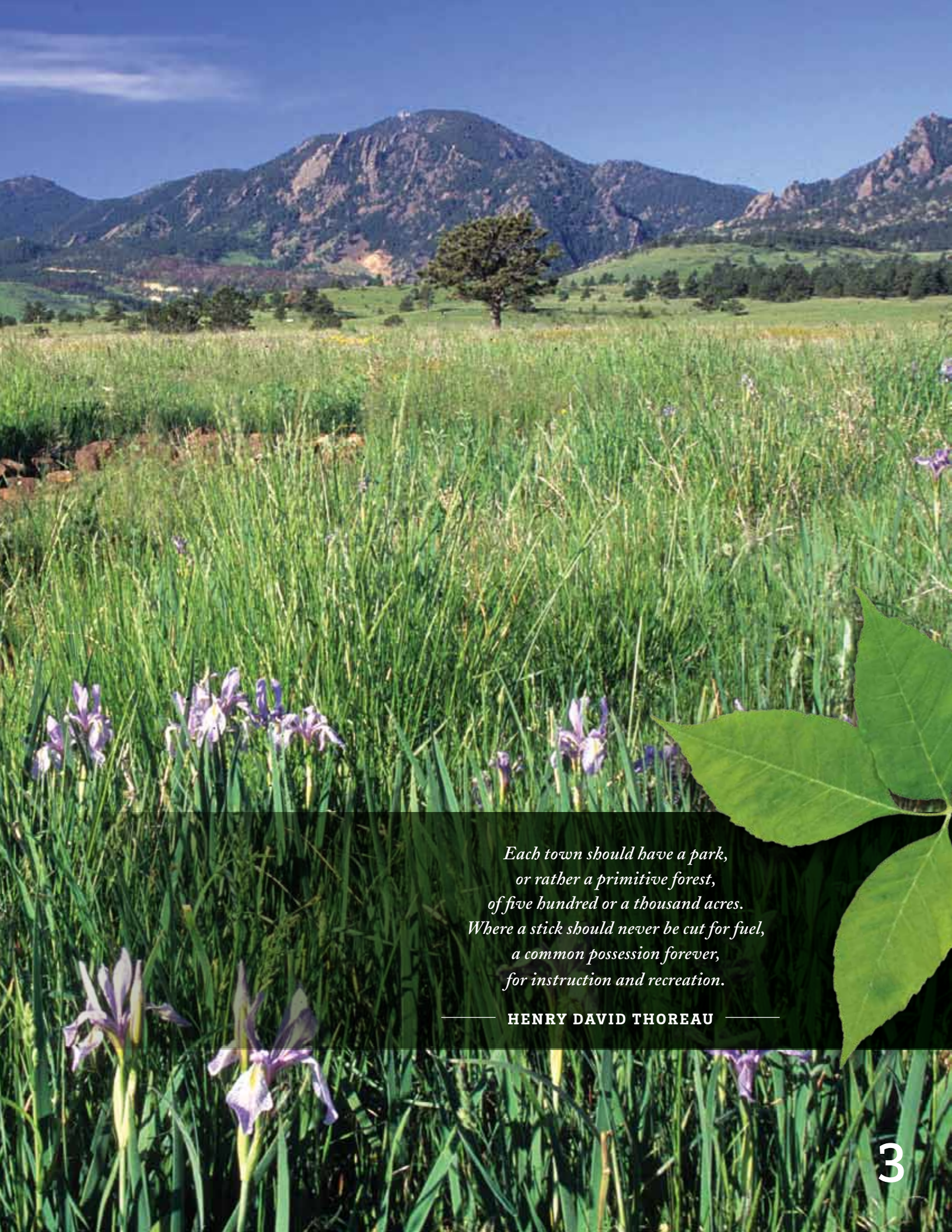
*City of Boulder*  
**OPEN SPACE &  
MOUNTAIN PARKS**



A scenic landscape photograph showing a grassy field with a stone wall in the foreground. In the background, there are rolling green hills and mountains under a blue sky with some clouds. The text "PROTECTING *your* COMMUNITY TREASURE" is overlaid on the top part of the image.

PROTECTING *your* COMMUNITY TREASURE





*Each town should have a park,  
or rather a primitive forest,  
of five hundred or a thousand acres.  
Where a stick should never be cut for fuel,  
a common possession forever,  
for instruction and recreation.*

— HENRY DAVID THOREAU —



City of Boulder  
OPEN SPACE &  
MOUNTAIN PARKS



Photo: Wendy Marie Stuart

**PROTECT**  
*your* PRECIOUS WILDLIFE

**CONNECT**  
WITH NATURE



Photo: Ann G. Duncan

**4**

City of Boulder  
OPEN SPACE & MOUNTAIN PARKS



Photo: Dave Kirchner

**59** SPECIES OF MAMMALS





**REFLECT**

ON OUR PAST



**100+**  
SPECIES OF BIRDS



*Photo: Wendy Marie Stuart*



**700**  
SPECIES OF  
PLANTS



*Photo: Leo Hudson*





*Photo: Ann G. Duncan*

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## LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

**Ask the question, "What is open space?" and you are bound to get a variety of answers. Some define it as any undeveloped land. Others state it is any area of land or water that remains in its natural state.**

Yet, while the term open space may lack a consistent definition, there seems to be a solid consensus on its purpose. Most people agree that open space provides us "room to breathe," the chance to enjoy the nature that surrounds us, a place to enjoy passive recreation opportunities and a place where nature is the focus.

Boulder's Open Space and Mountain Parks protects areas of unique scenic beauty and provides a place where wildlife and plant species can thrive in their native habitats. It also serves to shape our urban environment and preserve the agrarian nature of the Boulder Valley.

The citizens of Boulder have long recognized the unique beauty of the lands surrounding them and have campaigned tirelessly to preserve them. Beginning with actions to protect the Chautauqua meadow and the Flatirons backdrop around the turn of the 20th century, Boulder's Open Space program has been one of innovation and countless firsts that has served as a model for other open space programs all over the state, country and world.

Today, via more than 650 individual transactions, the City of Boulder has amassed a 45,000 acre Open Space and Mountain Parks land system. Our work however, is far from done. Our early thoughts were that our open space would be a place to preserve the natural flora and fauna so that others, now and in the future, could enjoy the nature native to the Front Range for millennia. But due to widespread development throughout the area, many native species are now crowded into our limited space. Additionally, the beauty of our lands has attracted an ever-increasing number of visitors (we're up to 5.3 million visits a year), and this puts enormous stress on the system. Everyday we are challenged to strike a balance between recreation and preservation, but fortunately we have a talented and hardworking staff and an engaged community supported by an unbelievable network of volunteers who are all dedicated to maintaining our system for perpetuity.

The past year, like many others, has been busy and productive. Our primary focus has been to protect our land, connect with our visitors in a meaningful way and to reflect on our past to ensure a viable future. We are pleased to offer a snapshot of where we are today and the journey that led us here, and we thank you for your continued support of this important community treasure.

*Michael Patton*

.....  
**PROTECT.  
CONNECT.  
REFLECT.**  
.....

*Our primary focus has been to protect our land, connect with our visitors in a meaningful way and to reflect on our past to ensure a viable future.*  
.....



In 2010-2011,  
we surveyed a total  
of **2,553** visitors



And, they said they  
most enjoyed:

“ The birds,  
the butterflies,  
the beauty...” ”



Photo: Christian Nunes



**41%** of those surveyed said they  
were visiting to hike or walk

**19%** were there to walk their dog

**18%** were there to run

**11%** were there to cycle



Photo: Caroline McLean

“ Great trails and great  
weather – Boulder’s Open  
Space can’t be beat! ”

## Our HERITAGE

Boulder’s Open Space and Mountain Parks owes its past, present and future to the citizens of Boulder, who have long recognized the unique beauty of their lands and campaigned tirelessly to protect them. In 1986, Boulder voters adopted a charter that directs the acquisition and management of the city’s Open Space land, and every move we make endeavors to put its principles into practice.

## Our CHARTER

The city’s Open Space land shall be acquired, maintained, preserved, retained, and used only for the following purposes:

- Preservation or restoration of natural areas characterized by or including terrain, geologic formations, flora, or fauna that is unusual, spectacular, historically important, scientifically valuable, or unique, or that represent outstanding or rare examples of native species
- Preservation of water resources in their natural or traditional state, scenic areas or vistas, wildlife habitats, or fragile ecosystems
- Preservation of land for passive recreation use, such as hiking, photography or nature studies, and if specifically designated, bicycling, horseback riding, or fishing
- Preservation of agricultural uses and land suitable for agricultural production
- Utilization of land for shaping the development of the city, limiting urban sprawl and disciplining growth
- Utilization of non-urban land for spatial definition of urban areas
- Utilization of land to prevent encroachment on floodplains
- Preservation of land for its aesthetic or passive recreational value and its contribution to the quality of life of the community.



## SIMPLY AMAZING

The peacefulness of the nature surrounding you will immediately soothe and restore your spirit. One moment you'll be trekking through a tallgrass prairie, and the next you'll find yourself forging through forested foothills.

You may feel like you've stepped back in time when you encounter cool canyons where Ice Age conditions still exist. You may wonder if you are still in Colorado when you come upon stands of paper birch, which are rare in this part of the United States. You may spot a hops blue butterfly – something you can only find on Colorado's Front Range – or see a gorgeous golden eagle soar through the sky.

Welcome to the City of Boulder's Open Space and Mountain Parks (OSMP). Located where Colorado's Great Plains meet the Rocky Mountains, there truly is no other place in the nation that you will find the biodiversity that exists within this 45,000 acres. With an estimated 700 species of plants, 59 species of mammals and 100+ species of birds on the land, you're bound to see something amazing here.

*Forested foothills can be found throughout Boulder's Open Space.*



Photo: Ann G. Duncan



Photo: Klaus Girk

*You can expect to see a variety of raptors soaring through the sky.*



*One of the only places in the world where you will find the hops blue butterfly.*





1907. Boulder Colorado Chautauqua Auditorium. Flatirons in Background





## **AN INNOVATIVE PAST ENSURES A PROGRESSIVE FUTURE**

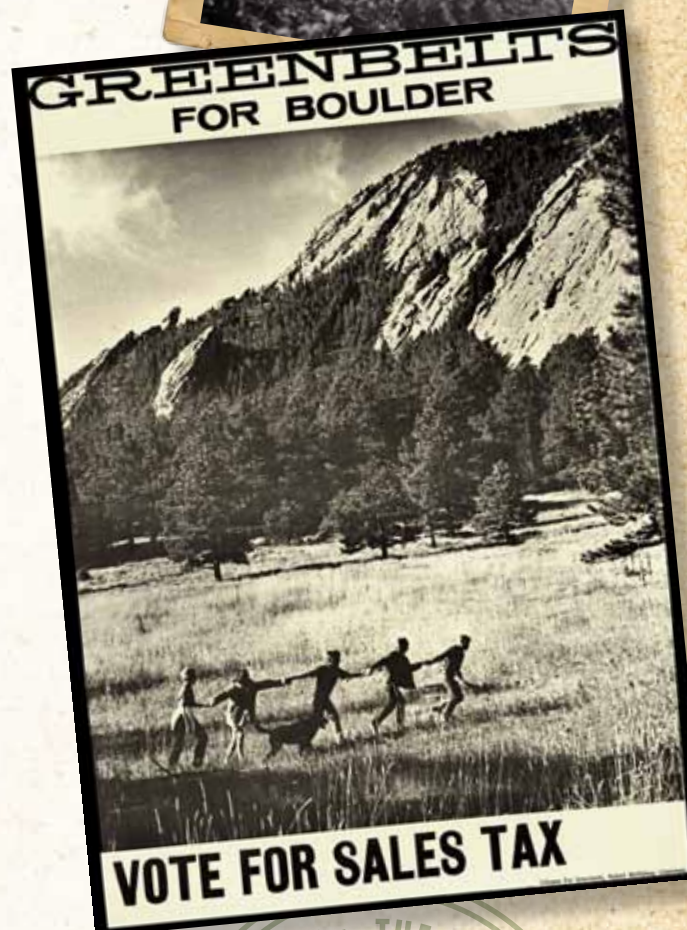
The history of the open space movement extends back to the second half of the 19th century. Frederick Law Olmsted, a landscape architect and pioneer of public open space protection during that period, believed that “no single park, no matter how large and how well designed, would provide the citizens with the beneficial influences of nature.”

Instead, Olmsted insisted that parks needed “to be linked to one another and to surrounding residential neighborhoods.” His idea of creating open space for the benefits of nature evolved into the modern greenways movement.

Boulder was an early adopter of the greenways movement. It has been acquiring land through purchase, donation and other means since acquiring 75 acres known as the Batchelder tract (the present site of Chautauqua Park) in 1898. And, in 1967, as a true pioneer of open space, Boulder became the first city in the U.S. to vote to tax itself specifically for open space. Today Boulder’s Open Space program continues the acquisition and preservation of open space. We have become a model for countless other programs all over the state, country and world.

Today, via more than 650 individual transactions, Boulder has amassed a 45,000 acre OSMP land system.

**Our innovative past ensures a progressive future.**





# EVOLUTION OF A COMMUNITY TREASURE



## 1898

The day after Chautauqua's grand opening, the city purchases the eastern slope of Flagstaff Mountain.



## 1912

The city purchases another 1,200 acres of land on Flagstaff Mountain from the U.S. for \$1.25 per acre.

## 1959

Boulder voters approved a 'blue line' charter amendment that limits water extensions above an elevation of 5,750 ft to preserve the mountain backdrop.



## 1907

The Federal government gives Boulder 1,600 acres of land on Flagstaff Mountain.



## 1959

Boulder's population doubles between 1950 and 1960, and concerned citizens form an action group known as PLAN Boulder County. The group goes on to successfully campaign for many important land preservation issues.



## 1967

Boulder voters make history by approving a 0.40 of a cent sales tax in perpetuity specifically to buy, manage, and maintain open space, the first time citizens in any U.S. city vote to tax themselves specifically for open space.





The OSMP program is the product of a long history of actions taken by both the citizens and the City of Boulder to preserve buffer areas, natural areas, and the mountain backdrop.



## 1971

Boulder voters approve a 55-foot building height limit and pass a charter amendment allowing City Council to issue bonds for the acquisition of open space.



## 1978

The city and Boulder County jointly adopt The Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan, a definitive guide for land-use decisions in the Boulder Valley.



## 1989

Boulder voters add 0.33 of a cent to the sales tax for a period of 15 years to accelerate open space preservation; in 1997, voters extend the tax through 2018.



Photo: Steve Mertz

## 2003

Voters add 0.15 of a cent sales tax through 2019 to fund continued land acquisitions and maintenance.

## 1973

Citizen activists successfully campaign for the creation of a separate Open Space Department focused on acquiring and maintaining natural land.



Photo: Jack Sasson

## 1986

Boulder voters pass a charter amendment providing additional protection for open space lands.



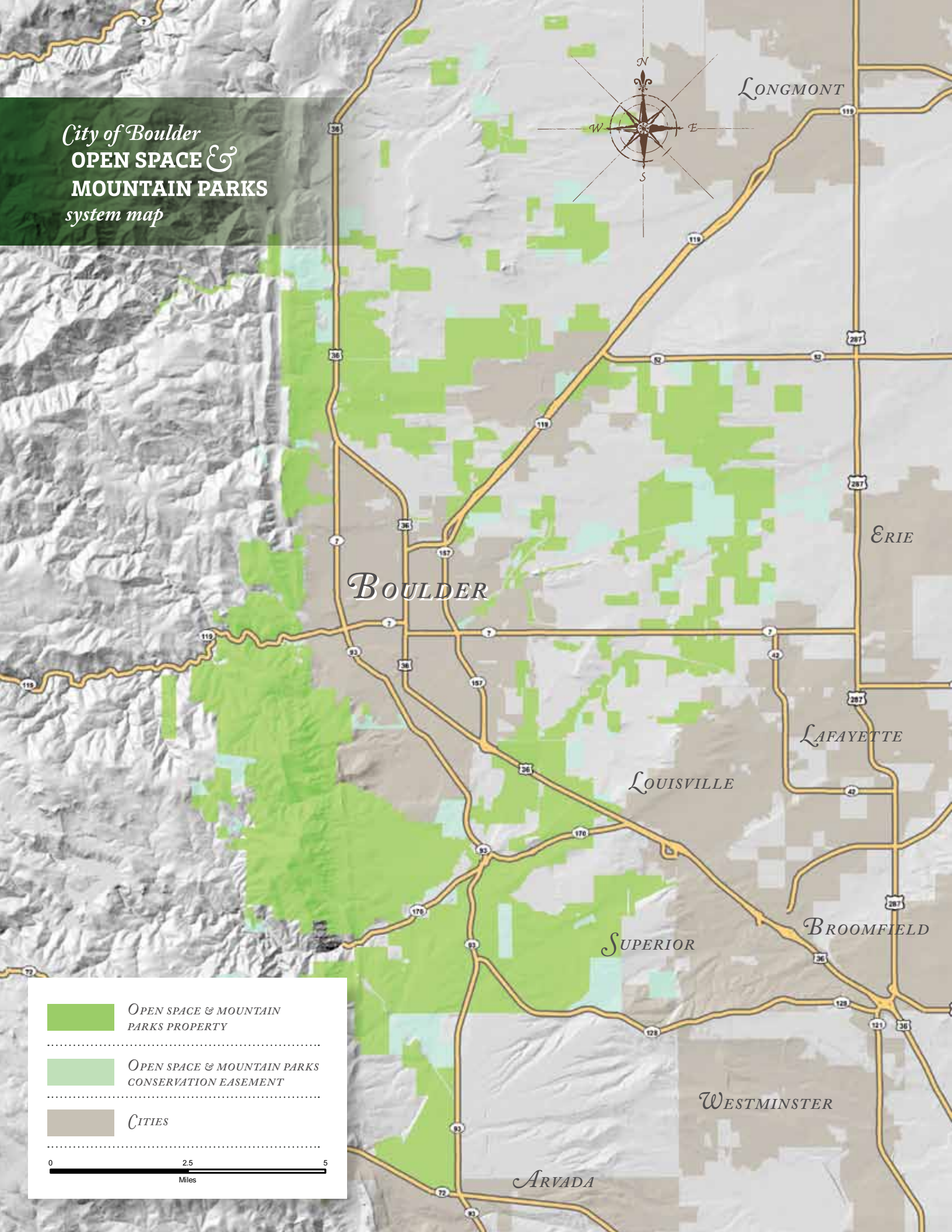
## 2001

City Council merges the Mountain Parks and Open Space programs to form the current City of Boulder Open Space and Mountain Parks (OSMP) Department.





*City of Boulder*  
**OPEN SPACE &  
MOUNTAIN PARKS**  
*system map*



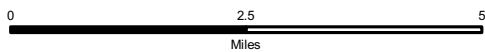
OPEN SPACE & MOUNTAIN  
PARKS PROPERTY



OPEN SPACE & MOUNTAIN PARKS  
CONSERVATION EASEMENT



CITIES





## 2012: THE YEAR IN REVIEW

**For us, 2012 will be marked by two major events that caused our team to change direction for a time in order to stay true to our mission to protect our land, connect with our visitors in a meaningful way, and to reflect on our past to ensure a viable future.**

In late 2011, we learned that the USA Pro Challenge, one of the largest professional cycling races in the United States, would be coming through Boulder. The key element that solidified Boulder's selection as a "host" city was a finish at the summit of Flagstaff Mountain. The decision to allow this finish was not taken lightly as Flagstaff Road traverses very important ecologically sensitive lands, including access to Gregory and Long Canyons. However, once it was made, we went to work to address resource protection of our properties all along the race route.

Estimates of the number of fans that would watch the race on Flagstaff Mountain ranged from as few as 120 to as many as 140,000, so there was much to prepare for. Access to Flagstaff Mountain prior to the race and after the race had to be planned and managed. Visitor safety and fire protection measures had to be established and executed. Waste management needed to be accounted for and a code of conduct had to be written and enforced. A bike corral had to be built for visitors who would travel to the race by bike. The list was extensive, and in the end, each and every member of OSMP, supported by a large pool of dedicated volunteers, oversaw a highly successful event on August 25, 2012.

In the midst of our preparation for the USA Pro Challenge, our state found itself in the middle of an especially volatile fire season. We were dealing with a series of blazes driven by a relentless heat wave including the Waldo Canyon Fire near Colorado Springs and the High Park Fire near Fort Collins when a fire broke out on our system. The Flagstaff Fire started on June 26 from a lightning strike on the west side of



Bear Peak, near Bison Drive. The fire burned approximately 300 acres, mostly on the west sides of Bear Peak and South Boulder Peak, and the upper part of Shadow Canyon, but it could have been much worse. Again, each and every member of OSMP did his or her part to ensure the fire was successfully contained.

As the Greek Philosopher Heraclitus once said, "The only thing that is constant is change." At OSMP, we have to always be ready for it, and we are.





# CONNECT

*with nature*

.....

In metropolitan areas across the country, you can hear the laments over the loss of green space to sprawling development. But, that's not the case here in Boulder. Here abundant open space makes the area one of the most desirable places to live and work in the country. And, within the OSMP organization, we are dedicated to ensuring the quality of life is enhanced through a connection to your open space.





*In every walk with nature one receives far more than he seeks.*

– John Muir

## COMMUNITY OUTREACH

The mission of OSMP's Community Outreach team is to provide services that improve the community's open space experience. Whether it is helping you to plan the perfect family hike, enabling you to develop a deeper connection with the land through volunteerism, or organizing a special educational event for your scout troop, Community Outreach is here to help you connect to your open space.

The Community Outreach team has three primary workgroups:

**359** programs

### EDUCATION SERVICES

In 2012, this group offered 359 programs to the community that reached over 11,000 people. Programs took the form of both free public hikes known as Natural Selections, and customized programs requested of the department by various community groups and schools.

**102,409**  
outreach contacts

### OUTREACH SERVICES

The members of Outreach Services are the true "faces of OSMP." In 2012, the efforts of this group resulted in 102,409 outreach contacts focused on communicating the value of open space.

**26,000**  
volunteer hours

### VOLUNTEER SERVICES

Volunteer Services doesn't just focus on getting – they focus on giving by employing a 'learning through service' approach that ensures that all volunteers leave with both knowledge and skills they may not have had before. In 2012 this group managed 1,040 volunteers who contributed over 26,000 hours of time.





Photo: Lisa Dierauf



Photo: Tom Chamberlin

## EDUCATION SERVICES

### 2012 HIGHLIGHTS:

- Of the 359 programs offered in 2012, 236 were requested hikes and the remaining 123 were free hikes offered to the public at large. The programs covered a wide range of topics including general wildlife, ecology, safety, geology, astronomy, conservation areas, pine beetles, forest ecology, wetlands, grasslands, full-moon hikes, bike hikes, and hikes for the Spanish speaking community.
- Many programs were led by a dedicated group of Volunteer Naturalists. In fact, in 2012, 43 active Volunteer Naturalists were involved with 264 programs.
- In 2012, OSMP's Education Services expanded the OSMP and the Arts Program to include an art show celebrating community art inspired by OSMP lands. The OSMP and the Arts Program was established seven years ago to create a deeper connection between the public and the land via a series of educational programs and exhibits.

## OUTREACH SERVICES

### 2012 HIGHLIGHTS:

- Despite a very hot and dry summer and several wildfire challenges, the Outreach Services team managed to set several records in 2012. Staff at the Ranger Cottage made a record breaking 46,218 face-to-face contacts during the year. And, the Ranger Cottage was open for a record number of days – 363, including all major holidays!
- Outreach at various local farmers' markets, festivals, and other community events yielded an additional 34,287 face-to-face contacts, many of which were in Spanish.
- Trailhead contacts totaled over 17,000. Topics discussed included wildfire closures, dogs and heat safety, and the protection of a family of burrowing owls.

## WHAT'S NEXT

An abundance of education services will continue to be offered to the community. Improvements will be made to the Chautauqua Ranger Cottage, a 2nd edition of the wildly popular Coyote Bob Comic Book will be released, and another Meadow Music series will be produced. The OSMP system will continue to become more accessible for wheelchair visitors via improvements to trailheads, facilities and trails. Additional guides, in video and print, will be produced for visitors with disabilities. These guides will explore more than 20 miles of OSMP trails.

*Do you have a group that would like to learn more about nature?*

*Take advantage of our outdoor classroom and the services provided free by our staff. To schedule a program:*

*VISIT*

[www.bouldercolorado.gov/requestahike](http://www.bouldercolorado.gov/requestahike)





## THE AMERICORPS

OSMP also hosted two teams from The AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC) in 2012. These teams gave 40 hours a week for a period of four months – contributing a whopping total of 5000+ volunteer hours.

### STEWARDSHIP PROJECT VOLUNTEERS

Stewardship Project Volunteers put their 'hands on the land' via one-day or multi-day on-the-ground projects such as restoration, trail building, trail cleanup and ditch maintenance. They contributed 16,542 hours in 2012.

#### 2012 PARTICIPANTS INCLUDED:

- Boulder City Improvement Agency
- Eagle Scout Groups
- Only Natural Pet Store
- Resource Conservation
- Senior Hire
- The Flatirons Climbing Council (FCC)
- University of Colorado (including groups from Sewell Hall and several classes)
- VMware Software
- Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado (VOC)
- Wildlands Restoration Volunteers (WRV)

### PROGRAM VOLUNTEERS

Program Volunteers participated in longer-term or year-round programs and contributed 9,483 hours in 2012.

#### 2012 HIGHLIGHTS

<b>Bat Monitors</b>	Contributed 914 hours
<b>Bear Care Team</b>	Contributed 122 hours
<b>Bike Patrollers</b>	Contributed 1,320 hours
<b>Hayfield Monitors</b>	Contributed 44 hours
<b>Hosts</b>	Contributed 706 hours
<b>Native Garden Team</b>	Contributed 179 hours
<b>Naturalists</b>	Contributed 956 hours
<b>Raptor Monitors</b>	Contributed 2,165 hours
<b>Staff Assistants &amp; Interns</b>	Contributed 225 hours
<b>Trail Guides</b>	Contributed 1,852 hours

## OUR BOARD

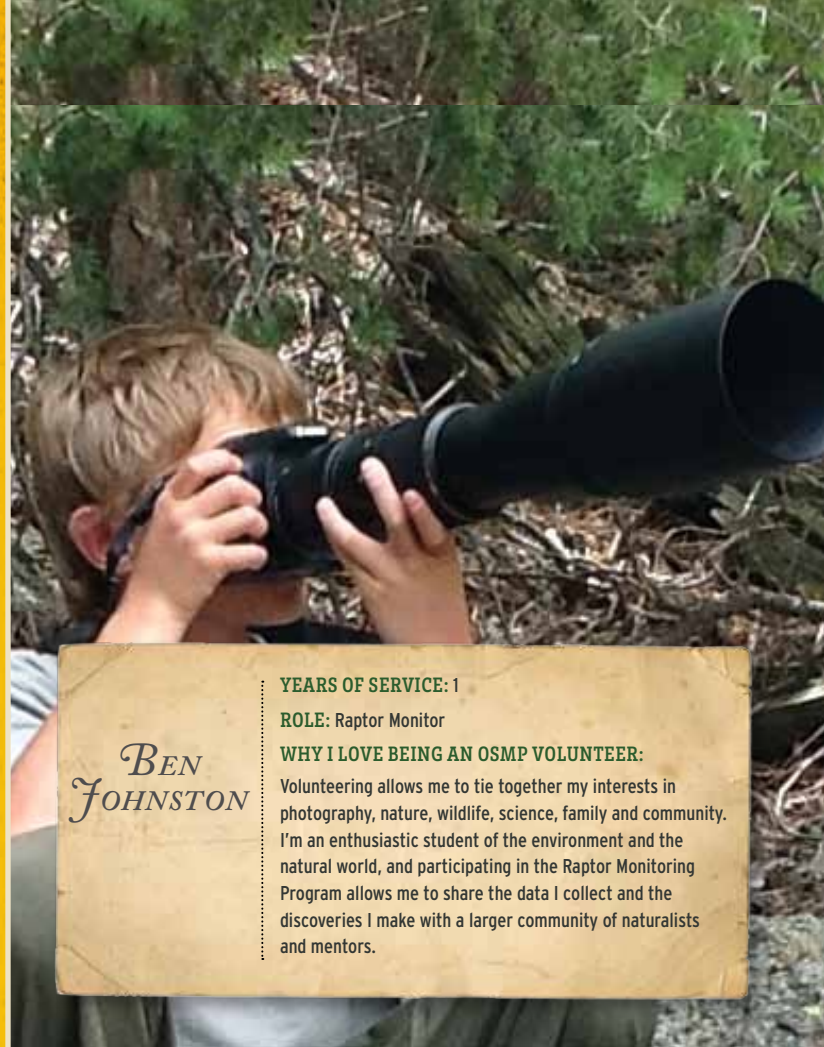
OSMP also receives extensive support from the Open Space Board of Trustees. The board works closely with OSMP and makes recommendations to City Council and staff on the acquisition and management of Open Space. Many thanks to 2012 Board members: John Putnam, Allyn Feinberg, Tom Isaacson, Shelley Dunbar and Frances Hartog.



# Meet your volunteers

In 2012, 1,040 volunteers contributed over 26,000 hours of time. The service provided by these dedicated individuals to OSMP is invaluable.

OSMP volunteers come from all different backgrounds to serve our community together. They are students, new college grads, senior citizens and individuals exploring the possibility of a new career. Each volunteer brings unique talents to the table and makes a huge impact on our program by sharing their time, energy, and skills.



*BEN  
JOHNSTON*

**YEARS OF SERVICE:** 1

**ROLE:** Raptor Monitor

**WHY I LOVE BEING AN OSMP VOLUNTEER:**

Volunteering allows me to tie together my interests in photography, nature, wildlife, science, family and community. I'm an enthusiastic student of the environment and the natural world, and participating in the Raptor Monitoring Program allows me to share the data I collect and the discoveries I make with a larger community of naturalists and mentors.



*CAROLYN  
BRIGHAM*

**YEARS OF SERVICE:** 5

**ROLES:** Volunteer Naturalist, Native Garden Volunteer and Meadow Music Host

**WHY I LOVE BEING AN OSMP VOLUNTEER:**

As a former teacher, I love the time spent on the trails and in the classrooms with curious kids eager to learn about the wild lands in Boulder. It has been a terrific experience and a real privilege to volunteer for such an amazing organization!



*DOUG  
GINLEY*

**YEARS OF SERVICE:** 7

**ROLES:** Bike Patroller, Trail Guide and Stewardship Volunteer

**WHY I LOVE BEING AN OSMP VOLUNTEER:**

I truly enjoy helping people and making them feel at home in the outdoor world, and volunteering gives me the chance to share my knowledge so OSMP visitors can fully enjoy their experiences. I also want to share the importance of preserving and caring for the wonderful gift that is OSMP!





#### FOURTH YEAR JUNIOR RANGER

*ELSA  
KELLY*

##### HER EXPERIENCE:

The people are the best part of being a Junior Ranger. They form a wonderful community, and are some of the nicest you'll ever meet. It is great to work on the trails and see how much effort is put into what some in Boulder may take for granted. It is also fun to work outside.



#### THIRD YEAR JUNIOR RANGER

*TONYA  
INGERSON*  
*left*

##### HER EXPERIENCE:

There's got to be a reason I keep coming back! I have learned so much from this job and I hope to learn even more in [my last year] with the program. Junior Rangers has been such an incredible opportunity to learn about myself, how I interact with others and work, and I've grown to appreciate and love the city I live in as a result. I love this job and I want to carry on its legacy for as long as I can.

## Meet your Junior Rangers

The Junior Ranger Program is Boulder's premier youth service corps for teens ages 14-17. Each summer candidates compete for jobs to help OSMP with a variety of natural resource management projects.

The program ensures that service and learning go hand in hand by giving participants the opportunity to meet with experts in wildlife, geology, history and ecology and teaches important skills like teamwork, leadership and listening. In 2012, 100 teens were hired and more than 16,800 hours of service were logged.



#### SECOND YEAR JUNIOR RANGER

*TRACE  
HYBERSTON*

##### HIS EXPERIENCE:

The Junior Ranger Program has made me stronger and a better team member. The best part of the job is the chance to work outside.



## VISITOR ACCESS

Your connection with the OSMP system relies heavily on your experience on its trails. Trails serve as a means for people to access and recreate on the land, and help us to direct people toward areas of interest, and away from natural resources that could be disturbed by human traffic. OSMP has 146 miles of designated and maintained trails. There are 32 designated trailheads and 75 other designated access points to reach trails. The Visitor Access team is divided into two primary workgroups: Trails and Trailheads.

## TRAILS

### 2012 HIGHLIGHTS:

- The Trails crew, supported by the Junior Rangers, AmeriCorps crews, court-assigned work crews and general volunteers, focused on maintaining existing and constructing new trails. 2012 was the first full year of implementation of projects identified in the West Trail Study Area (TSA) Plan – an aggressive plan for re-routing and repairing many of the trails in Boulder's mountain backdrop. West TSA projects completed included trail work at Homestead, Towhee, Green Bear, Sunshine Canyon and Contact Corner trails.

<b>At Homestead</b>	3,960 feet of trail re-route was constructed, 2,300 feet of heavy trail maintenance was done and 3,600 feet of trail was closed and restored
<b>At Towhee</b>	900 feet of trail re-route was constructed, and 1,800 feet of trail was closed and restored
<b>At Green Bear</b>	2,530 feet of trail re-route was constructed, and 5,250 feet of trail was closed and restored
<b>At Sunshine Canyon</b>	1.1 miles of trail re-route was constructed, and 3,200 feet of social trail was closed and restored
<b>At Contact Corner</b>	630 feet of trail reconstruction and heavy maintenance was completed, 970 feet of trail was closed and restored, and 570 feet of buck-and-rail fence was constructed

- Trail work prioritized as a result of the Flagstaff Fire included projects on the Bear Peak West Ridge and Cragmoor-Fern Meadow trails.

<b>At Bear Peak West Ridge</b>	3,470 feet of trail reconstruction was completed
<b>At Cragmoor - Fern Meadow</b>	1,850 feet of trail re-route was constructed, and 2,000 feet of social trail was closed and restored

- The Trails crew also dedicated 2-3 weeks at the beginning of the season to trail maintenance and also revisited various trails throughout the season to complete cyclical maintenance.

## WHAT'S NEXT

Four trails – Upper Big Bluestem, Wittemyer/West Sanitas, Anemone and Shadow Canyon – will be a focus of larger-scale construction projects.





## TRAILHEADS

**The Trailhead crew, supported by court-assigned work crews, community service workers and Eagle Scouts, are responsible for maintaining trailheads and access points and their surrounding areas. Their responsibilities include maintaining 32 trailheads and 75 access points, servicing restrooms and trash cans, maintaining picnic areas and ADA paths, and troubleshooting day-to-day issues like snow and graffiti removal.**

## 2012 HIGHLIGHTS:

- Managed the installation of new bat gate at Mallory Cave. The installation of the gate, designed to protect the bats during the summer when they're raising their young, involved transporting 62 bags of concrete, 300+ lbs. of welding equipment and the heavy gates themselves up steep series of switchbacks.
- Constructed a trailhead for the new Chapman Drive Trail that begins at Realization Point on Flagstaff Drive. The new trail section allows visitors to go from Boulder Canyon Drive all the way to Flagstaff Drive.
- Completed improvements to the new South Boulder Creek West Trailhead. Changes included several additional parking spaces for cars and pull-through spots for horse trailers, a new pathway from the parking area to the trail, and the installation of a new restroom and Regulatory Kiosk.
- Performed major ADA trail work including the removal of encroaching vegetation and organic materials from trails, widening of trails to ADA standards, making picnic tables and bench areas ADA compliant and more.



## WHAT'S NEXT

As the implementation of the West TSA plan progresses, both new trailheads and updates to existing ones will be required. Flagstaff Summit and Gregory Canyon will be focus areas. The Trailhead crew will also continue to explore new ways to save money and the environment. Past efforts have included the design of special dog tubes that allow visitors to donate their own bags and an experiment with solar powered outhouses.



# PROTECT

*our future*

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Everyday across the United States, we lose 6,000 acres of open space at a rate of four acres per minute. This land is being rapidly lost to various kinds of development. Fortunately the citizens of Boulder have long recognized the unique beauty of their land and have worked tirelessly since the turn of the 20th century to protect our unique environment from development. At OSMP we have a passionate group of employees and volunteers dedicated to both preserving and protecting the natural resources that characterize OSMP and safeguarding the assets required to support the system.





*Our goal is to protect OSMP from environmental damage, rather than repair it later.*

*Photo: Ann G. Duncan*

## ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS

The mission of the Ecological Systems team is to preserve, protect and restore native flora and fauna on OSMP lands. OSMP features a diverse mix of plant and animal species, forming complex ecological communities. These habitats and the natural processes that sustain them make the system one of the most biologically rich areas in the United States. Accordingly, the Ecological Systems team is comprised of ecologists with expertise in plant ecology, wildlife ecology, wetland ecology, ecological restoration and integrated pest management.

**100+**  
species of birds

### WILDLIFE

OSMP's habitat diversity is one reason why at least 100 species of birds breed in the forests, grasslands, and wetlands.

**8,000**  
acres

### FORESTS

OSMP manages roughly 8,000 acres of ponderosa pine and mixed conifer forests.

**24,000**  
acres

### GRASSLANDS

A patchwork quilt of tall- and mixed-grass prairie and agricultural land cover approximately 24,000 acres of OSMP.

**3,000**  
acres

### WETLANDS AND RIPARIAN CORRIDORS

OSMP manages approximately 3,000 acres of wetland, ponds, streams, and riparian corridors.

**68**  
invasive species

### INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT (IPM)

The Integrated Pest Management Program considers 68 invasive species a threat to the sustainability of OSMP natural lands.





## WILDLIFE

The OSMP wildlife team conducts surveys to learn more about the distribution and abundance of insects, birds, mammals, amphibians, and fish to restore degraded wildlife habitat and protect key wildlife habitat during management planning processes like the Grassland Ecosystem Management Plan and the West Trail Study Area Plan.

### 2012 HIGHLIGHTS:

Wildlife staff worked with Ranger staff and Education and Outreach staff to improve volunteer monitoring programs like the raptor monitoring program and the bat monitoring program. They also partnered with researchers from the University of Colorado Boulder to assess the movements and habitat use of northern leopard frogs on OSMP to learn more about their habitat needs throughout the year.



## WHAT'S NEXT

### WILDLIFE

Wildlife staff will continue a wide range of research and monitoring projects in 2013 including one that may involve placing transmitters on rattlesnakes. They will also work on finalizing a management plan for the newly acquired Weiser property which is home to a pair of nesting bald eagles and other unique species.

## FORESTS

Work in OSMP's forests is directed by the city's Forest Ecosystem Management Plan and is focused on restoring and protecting native forest systems and reducing the wildfire risk to forest and human communities. Forest ecology staff uses a variety of management techniques, including prescribed fire and thinning, to restore and maintain healthy forests. They also track management decisions and success through system-wide monitoring projects.

### 2012 HIGHLIGHTS:

During the 2012 season OSMP forest management staff thinned over 120 acres of overgrown forest, served as an integral part of wildfire response on city lands (including the Flagstaff Fire), and completed multiple monitoring projects to inform adaptive management in the mountain backdrop.

*Photo: Josh Coutts*



### FORESTS

Staff will be doubling its forest management crew size, adding new equipment, and will dramatically expand project work with the goal of thinning over 250 acres in the course of the season. Work in the forest in 2013 will also include ongoing vegetation and wildlife monitoring, rare plant tracking, planning for prescribed fires and wildfires, and coordination with neighbors and other local agencies on forest management issues.



## GRASSLANDS

Under the direction of the Grassland Ecosystem Management Plan, ecology systems staff work to preserve, manage, and restore habitat for native plants, plant communities and wildlife – many of which are rare in Colorado or even globally imperiled. Prescribed burning and grazing, tree removal, noxious weed control and ecologically-conscious trail planning are all part of OSMP's approach to grassland conservation.

### 2012 HIGHLIGHTS

Grassland restoration projects included a prescribed burn in a rare tallgrass prairie, tree removal to improve ground-nesting bird habitat, native seed collection and upkeep of the OSMP nursery. Plant ecology staff collected data for a long-term grassland vegetation monitoring project, and rare plant monitoring in all OSMP habitats was accomplished by the restoration crew. These monitoring projects assess grassland health and help identify the best opportunities for focusing conservation efforts in grassland habitats.

## WETLANDS AND RIPARIAN CORRIDORS

Although the combined acreage of wetland, ponds, streams, and riparian corridors is small compared to other habitat types, these 3,000 acres support a disproportionate number of plant and wildlife species. Many native plants, birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, and fish, including OSMP's two federally threatened species, Preble's meadow jumping mouse and Ute ladies'-tresses orchid, rely on OSMP's wetlands and riparian corridors for at least a portion of their life cycle.

### 2012 HIGHLIGHTS

Staff restored former gravel mining pits and smaller isolated ponds in the South Boulder Creek watershed to improve northern leopard frog habitat and reduce invasive bullfrog breeding habitat. Staff also restored the riparian corridor and a former trail creek crossing to improve water quality and increase habitat block size for shrub nesting birds.

## WHAT'S NEXT

### GRASSLANDS

Plant ecology staff will begin re-mapping grassland vegetation to provide updated information for habitat conservation and restoration planning. In addition, monitoring will continue on OSMP's many rare plants and grassland health will be assessed through long-term vegetation monitoring. Staff will also collaborate with recreation staff on planning and implementing trail projects – applying OSMP's Ecological Best Management Practices for Trail Planning, Construction, Maintenance and Undesignated Trail Restoration.

### WETLANDS & RIPARIAN CORRIDORS

Wetland staff will restore over 200 acres of aquatic, riparian and floodplain habitat along South Boulder Creek by removing non-native plant species, planting native trees and shrubs, and enhancing in-stream habitat. Restoration of wetland and riparian habitat on 50 acres adjacent to Boulder Creek impacted by former gravel mining operations and other non-compatible land use will also take place.

## INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT

Many OSMP projects such as trail construction and resource management related activities often create some level of disturbance. And with disturbances often come invasive species. The Integrated Pest Management Program (IPM) considers 68 invasive species a threat to the sustainability of OSMP natural lands and promotes conservation through a variety of management and restoration practices.

### 2012 HIGHLIGHTS

IPM staff managed invasive species on approximately 7,500 acres of OSMP forest and grasslands and oversaw 900 acres of cultural and agricultural pest management activities. In addition, they focused on reducing the amounts of herbicides and other chemicals used to control invasive species by making use of volunteers, prescriptive livestock grazing, fire, and biological controls like the release of beneficial insects. This year, staff launched a multi-year restoration project on a newly acquired property along Boulder Creek to restore riparian and grassland habitat.

## WHAT'S NEXT

In 2013, IPM staff will continue to manage a growing list of invasive species and respond to changing conditions on the system due to drought, fire and other stresses. Prescriptive grazing involving both sheep and cattle combined with mowing will be used to improve the habitat and increase species diversity. Staff will also increase community education and promote stewardship through outreach at Farmers' Markets and other community events.



## RANGERS

Patrolling on foot, horseback or bike, OSMP Rangers perform the critical responsibilities of public safety and natural resource protection, and enforce new and existing rules and regulations. On any given day they could be helping a new visitor decide which of OSMP's trails to take with their young children for an enjoyable first-time hiking experience, fighting a wildfire, or responding to a mountain lion report. Their patrols include encounters with hundreds of visitors, natural hazards, and a myriad of other things that change from day-to-day.



## 2012 HIGHLIGHTS:

- Issued 740 summonses, 65% of which were dog related. Other infractions included: littering, camping, campfires and more. Responded to: 84 injured persons' calls, 24 search and rescue requests, 9 wildfires, 8 campfires and 8 other smoke reports, 6 injured dog calls, and more.
- Led fire fighting efforts for the Flagstaff Fire, which was a 3-day effort involving multiple crews and trucks, including OSMP's two brush truck engines.
- Delivered 56 educational programs in conjunction with the Community Outreach team and coordinated several volunteer programs and projects including bat and raptor monitoring.
- Responded to numerous calls on OSMP land and within the city limits linked to wildlife rescue, threats, and protection. Many calls were related to 11 bears living in the area.

## WHAT'S NEXT

2013 will be 'the year of the rangers' as the team will grow from 11 rangers to 16! The Rangers will continue providing formal and informal interpretative programs, presenting and interpreting natural history, and adding to visitor enjoyment and visitor safety. Rangers are certified in law enforcement, EMS, and wildland firefighting skills, and will continue to update their training and practice of these skills as needed.

*At the Chautauqua Ranger Cottage you can find park maps, brochures and information. It's staffed according to the following schedule:*

**May – September:**

9 am – 4 pm Weekdays | 8 am – 6 pm Weekends

**October:**

9 am – 4 pm Weekdays | 8 am – 5 pm Weekends

**November – April:**

9 am – 4 pm Daily



## RESOURCE INFORMATION SERVICES

A geographic information system (GIS) lets us visualize, question, analyze, interpret, and understand data to reveal relationships, patterns, and trends. At OSMP, the Resource Information team relies heavily on GIS to create a visual portrait of the system. This team processes all the information collected by other OSMP workgroups so that it is actionable. They also provide maps for the public, maps for planning purposes, and more.

In 2012, the team took on the major task of migrating all of its data to a new server. The effort was required to support an increase in the use of GIS technology and to provide greater protection of the data OSMP is collecting. They also supported several major initiatives like the USA Pro Challenge and an analysis of whether to put bison on the system or not.

Everyday, the team plays major roles in a myriad of OSMP's monitoring projects, and in 2013 they will continue to deliver data where and when it is needed. The Resource Information team truly gives us a new way to look at the OSMP system and enables optimal decision making to protect the space for perpetuity.

*The beginning is the most important part of the work.*  
–Plato



## ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING & MONITORING

Members of this group develop plans to articulate OSMP's goals and objectives, analyze threats to the sustainability of resources, and describe the action OSMP will take to ensure the system remains healthy and enduring. All plans are careful to describe how OSMP will deliver and balance the community services described in the City Charter. The Environmental Planning team works closely with both OSMP staff and the community when drafting plans and always takes their plans to both the Open Space Board and the City Council for approval.

The Long Range Management Policies were the first plans prepared by the Environmental Planning team. These policies, the City Charter and the Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan serve as the starting point for all additional plans. In the recent past, the Environmental Planning team has played critical roles in preparing and updating the Visitor Master Plan, the Forest Ecosystem Management Plan, the Grassland Ecosystem Management Plan, the Acquisition Plan and Trail Study Area (TSA) Plans.

Most plans designed have management objectives and related measures of success that help the group gauge whether plans are working, and the Environmental Monitoring team continually leads studies to monitor the success of their plans. Team members regularly assemble and analyze data including summaries of visitors' experiences on OSMP, conditions of trails, location and extent of undesignated trails and vegetation patterns. The monitoring team also assists other OSMP teams with the design and monitoring of workgroup-specific projects.

### RECENT MONITORING PROJECTS INCLUDE:

- City of Boulder Resident Survey
- OSMP Visitor Survey
- System-wide Trail Condition Monitoring
- System Wide Undesignated Trail Inventory
- Voice and Sight Tag Effectiveness Monitoring
- Grassland Vegetation Monitoring
- Impacts from Pro-Cycle Challenge Race

In 2013, the planning team will work on an update to the Acquisition Plan and coordinate the West TSA Plan implementation. The monitoring team will perform another round of Voice and Sight Tag monitoring, assess the messaging effectiveness of regulatory and education signs, complete a Visitor Services inventory for the North TSA and provide grassland and forest monitoring assistance.



## AGRICULTURE AND WATER RESOURCES

The Agriculture and Water staff oversee all agricultural activities and ditch maintenance and management activities required to deliver OSMP's water rights across the system. The Agriculture Program includes a portfolio of approximately 14,000 acres that is leased to local farmers and ranchers. Much of the acreage is currently dedicated to grazing land. All acreage is supported by the Water Resource Program, which manages a portfolio of water rights valued at \$60 million USD, and includes shares in nearly 30 local ditch companies.



*Photo: Doug Goodin*

### 2012 HIGHLIGHTS:

- 2012 saw a vast increase in a movement to produce more food for local consumption. One success story is the Black Cat Farm, which is currently utilizing 54 acres on the system for organic local food production. OSMP currently has 470 acres of agricultural land dedicated to the production of local food products.
- Participated in local and regional work groups dedicated to the development of locally produced food products and worked collaboratively with OSMP ecologists to develop a sustainable agricultural management plan for the newly acquired Weiser property.
- Monitored water diversion activities and applied irrigation water to the McKenzie property and the Papini property, where new irrigation structures were also constructed.
- Monitored stream flows throughout the year and measured water irrigation applications where appropriate to meet mandatory reporting requirements.

### WHAT'S NEXT

The Agricultural and Water staff will focus on identifying more opportunities to grow food for the local food movement including a regional effort to investigate the feasibility of a Boulder County Meat Cooperative. They will participate in local food summits and develop an edible landscape demonstration at the OSMP Operations Annex. The staff and agricultural tenants will work cooperatively on the implementation of sustainable agricultural practices including cover cropping the use of organic agricultural pesticides.





Photo: Julie Johnson

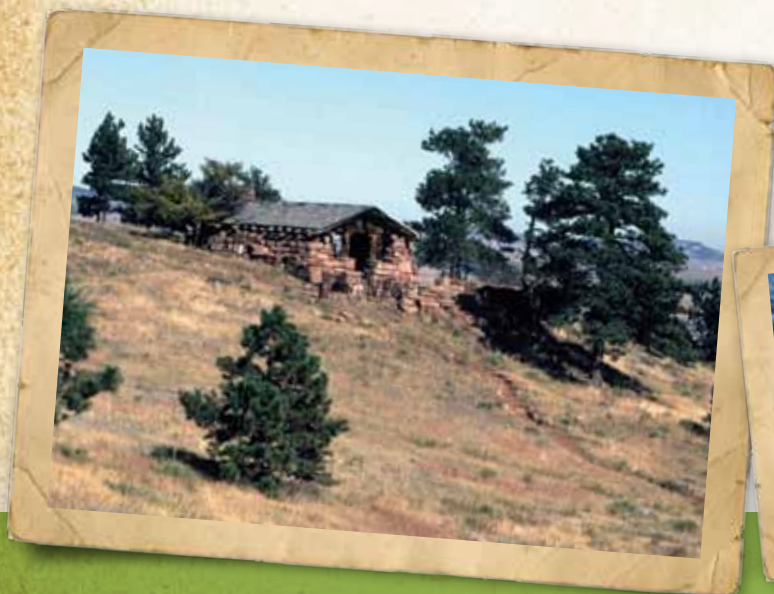


## SIGN & FACILITY MAINTENANCE

More than 100 buildings and structures on OSMP properties require some type of maintenance, including four office buildings, 13 homes, and numerous agricultural buildings, nature centers, parking lots and signs. The Sign and Facilities Maintenance staff is responsible for the preventative maintenance and repair of all OSMP office facilities, trail and trailhead information boards, and regulatory signs.

## 2012 HIGHLIGHTS:

- Oversaw several construction projects including the construction of a new Chapman Drive bridge, the parking lot in that area, the South Boulder Creek West Trailhead, and the Flagstaff Drive sediment basin
- Completed a multi-year initiative to install solar electric systems for three OSMP facilities. This effort has enabled OSMP to become the only net-generator of renewable energy in the city. The combination of decreased electric costs and renewable energy credits created by the initiative will save the city substantial dollars while also reducing OSMP's annual carbon emissions.
- Conducted routine maintenance on the existing portfolio of informational signs and replaced four trailhead identification signs. Worked collaboratively with other workgroups to develop a set of interpretative signs for the re-designed South Boulder Creek West Trailhead.



WHAT'S  
NEXT

The staff will complete updates to the Chautauqua Ranger cottage, including a remodel of the interior, and will make improvements to the Chautauqua parking lot. Work will continue on a second sediment containment structure on Flagstaff Road and trailhead updates that will ultimately ensure all trailheads meet new standards and design specifications. The staff will provide materials to support the implementation of the West TSA and updates to the Voice and Sight Tag Program as needed, and develop interpretive materials for Habitat Conservation Areas and the South Mesa Trailhead area.



## REAL ESTATE AND FINANCIAL SERVICES

Today, via more than 650 individual transactions, the City of Boulder has amassed a 45,000 acre OSMP land system. The current program is now a mature one, and new acquisitions are generally neither as large nor as numerous as in the earlier years. What we focus on bringing into the system are properties of ecological importance and parcels that offer trail connection opportunities. The majority of our funding is derived from sales tax revenues, and we are careful stewards of these resources as they are key to creating a sustainable system.



## FINANCIAL SERVICES 2012 HIGHLIGHTS:

- The Financial Services team is responsible for processing financial transactions in accordance with municipal, state and federal laws and regulations and following generally accepted accounting principles. The team prepares and submits the department's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) and operating budgets and provides analysis throughout the year. In addition, the Financial Services team provides purchasing and contracting support to project managers on a project-by-project basis.
- OSMP is supported by the City of Boulder's Open Space Fund, which is derived almost exclusively from sales tax revenue. A portion (0.88 percent) of sales tax collected in the city is dedicated to the Open Space Fund. Boulder voters approved four separate ballot measures in 1967, 1989, 1997 and 2003 to provide funds for the acquisition and management of Open Space. Two of these measures are anticipated to sunset by the end of the current decade.

### Open Space Fund: Dedicated Sales Taxes

Year	Amount	Initial Term	Extended	Sunset Anticipated
1967	0.40%	Approved in perpetuity		
1989	0.33%	15 years (1989-2004)	1997	2018
2003	0.15%	15 years (2004-2019)		2019







## REAL ESTATE SERVICES

Outside of acquiring property, the Real Estate Services team protects existing lands by insuring that all newly proposed easements or dispositions are properly vetted through the process established in our charter. The team also monitors more than 100 conservation easements, which OSMP has acquired.

## 2012 HIGHLIGHTS:

- Completed the acquisition of the Bonnie Schnell parcel, which includes 118 acres of land located adjacent to Red Lion on the northwest flank of Flagstaff Mountain. The acquisition enabled a trail connection from Boulder Canyon to the top of Flagstaff Mountain, which had been identified as a high priority in the West TSA Plan. It also features significant environmental values and is contiguous to the Western Mountain Parks Habitat Conservation Area on Flagstaff Mountain.
- Provided leasing, appraisal, site search, title research, analysis and insurance, property management, right-of-way cost estimating, real property disposal, litigation settlement and support services throughout the year.



## WHAT'S NEXT

In 2013 the Real Estate team will focus on completing additional acquisitions and a new Acquisition Plan that covers the next five years. Recent challenges regarding mineral rights on the system will continue to be a focus.



# REFLECT

*on our story*

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The vast resources of Boulder have been attracting people to the area for ages, and as such, the city has a rich and interesting history. What began as a home to Native Americans and evolved into a mining supply town, ultimately emerged as a vibrant city with a population approaching 100,000. The City of Boulder has amassed 45,000 acres of open space packed with both natural and man-made wonders, and today many of us at OSMP, including our Cultural Resources team, are focused on how to make our gems sparkle and shine for perpetuity.





“Without reflection, we go blindly on our way, creating more unintended consequences, and failing to achieve anything useful.”

—Margaret J. Wheatley

## CULTURAL RESOURCES

Early explorations in and around the City of Boulder and the many settlers that have come and gone have left OSMP with a vast amount of cultural resources. There are more than 100 buildings and structures on the OSMP system, including 13 homes and numerous other agricultural buildings and structures that represent past and present populations, cultures, and/or human activities and events. The OSMP Cultural Resources staff is tasked with studying the effects of human culture on the land and preserving important points of interest.

**100+**  
buildings &  
structures

### BUILDINGS & STRUCTURES

Including the Viele House, a City of Boulder historic landmark built in 1890, and the Hedgecock Ice House, one of OSMP's oldest structures.

**13** homes

### HOMES

Including the Weiser House, a gorgeous mid-century modern house built in 1963 that is a classic example of how a building can work with, not against its natural surroundings.

**1000s**  
of years  
of history

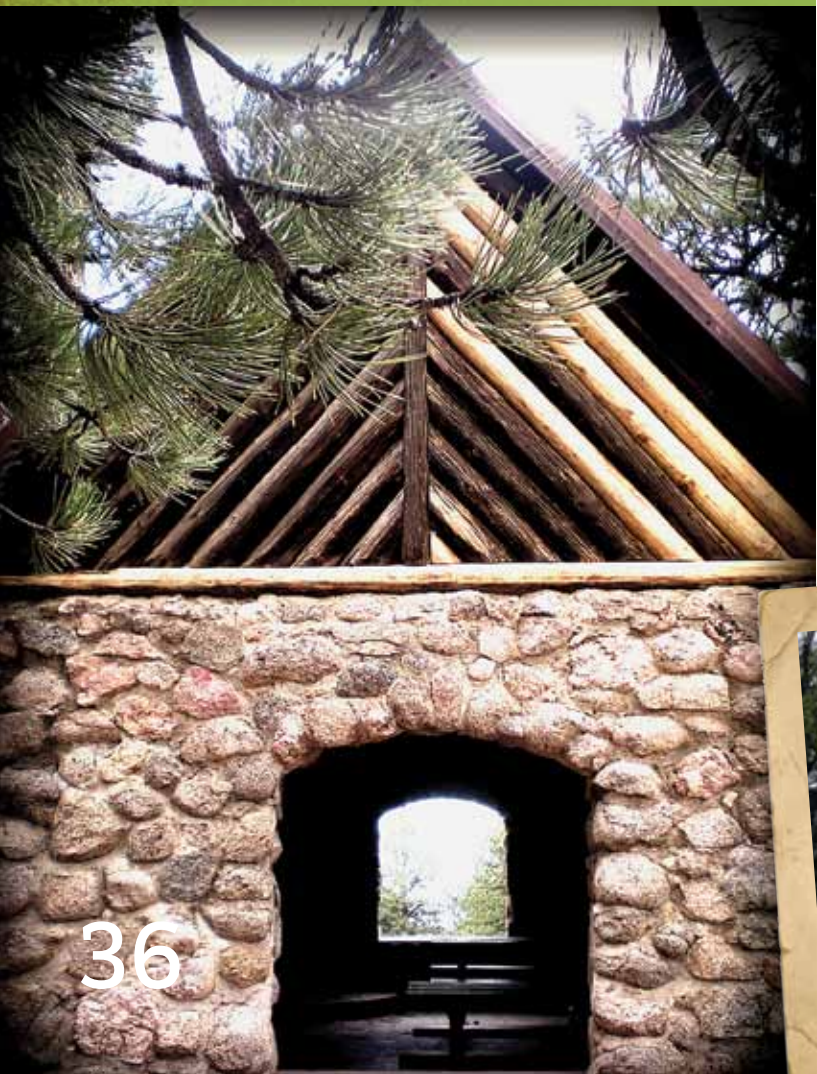
### A RICH HISTORY

The Native Americans, early European settlers and citizens of modern times have all contributed to Boulder's colorful history.



## AWARD-WINNING WORK

OSMP received two awards at the 2012 Historic Boulder, Inc. Annual Preservation Awards. The first was for the rehabilitation of Green Mountain Lodge and the second for the repair and rehabilitation of the Viele Shed at the Viele House. The shed was originally built to store equipment for the Viele's dairy farm operation and today, over 100 years later, it is once again serving its original purpose as it is used by current agricultural lessees. Both of these award-winning projects were made possible in part by a generous grant from the Boulder County Historic Landmark Rehabilitation Grant Program.



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## 2012 HIGHLIGHTS:

- **Chapman Drive Switchback and Cattle Guard Repair:** Chapman Drive, built in 1935 by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), had a switchback that was failing and beginning to collapse. This project repaired the switchback and a nearby cattle guard, also a CCC project.
- **Sanitas Stone Hut and Arch Repair:** This stone hut, built circa 1900 to entertain patients at the nearby Boulder Sanitarium, was losing mortar and stones, creating a safety hazard. This project strengthened the hut and made it safe for visitors again. It also repaired a nearby stone arch, built during the same period.
- **Hedgcock Ice House Repair:** This project repaired a stone house built in 1896 – one of OSMP's oldest structures.
- **Weiser House Repair:** This project made a recent acquisition, a gorgeous mid-century modern house built in 1963, functional once again.

## WHAT'S NEXT

The team will continue to focus on repairing and stabilizing as many cultural structures and sites as possible. Key focus areas include determining and eliminating water collection issues in the basement of the Viele House (a City of Boulder historic landmark built in 1890), repairing a Cherryvale agricultural district building, and designing and implementing interpretive signs in the Flagstaff Historic Cultural District.





## OUR FUTURE

**There is an ongoing discussion among various OSMP visitors and the dialog indicates a desire to increase the amount of open space dedicated to recreational uses. While we are blessed with a great deal of space, the current crowding and competition among visitors is clearly posing a challenge.**

OSMP receives 5.3 million visits a year. This number is significantly higher than the amount of visits Rocky Mountain National Park attracts annually, and we only have about a sixth of the land area of the national park.

In a recent survey, Boulder residents were asked about OSMP's management balance between recreation and preservation. Sixty eight percent of the participants said the balance is "about right." But of those that felt the balance was off, about the same number said there was too much emphasis on recreation as those who said there was too much emphasis on environmental preservation.

Striking the right balance in the eyes of the community is proving to be challenging, but without it the system is in jeopardy.

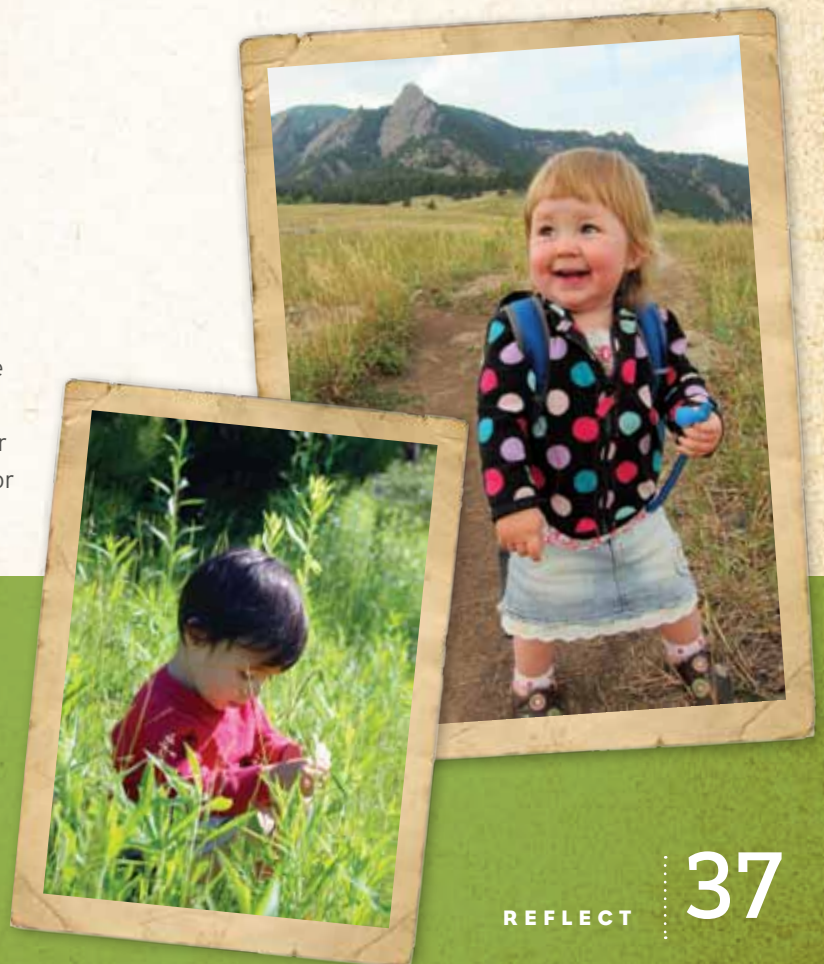
Here at OSMP, we're encouraging the community to think beyond today and their individual desires. If our predecessors took such an approach, we wouldn't have the 45,000 acre treasure we have today. Our open space isn't just for today; our open space should forever be a place for families to enjoy nature without contributing disturbance or destruction.

OSMP was not originally meant for recreation – but the reality is that recreation is today an equal partner with conservation. However, we must work carefully as a community to ensure one use doesn't dominate the other. If it does, it will greatly impact the sustainability of our program.

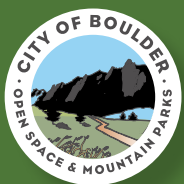
Over the coming weeks, months and year, our team will be spending time reflecting and devising a plan to put the pieces in place to provide the protection our community treasure needs to thrive. The development of OSMP was a pivot point that created a new direction for our community. Today, we stand at another turning point and we look forward to working with you to ensure we enhance your OSMP experience and improve your access to the system while also ensuring that we protect our open space for perpetuity. We thank you for your continued support of our important community treasure.

**“Greenbelts are for children,  
And their children,  
And their children...”**

**–Mavis McKelvey**







*City of Boulder*  
**OPEN SPACE &  
MOUNTAIN PARKS**

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